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# News Release



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## **LOCAL RESTORATION PROJECTS RECEIVE FUNDING FOR TERMINAL 6 AND JOHNSON CREEK SPILLS**

Natural resources in Portland's Columbia Slough and Johnson Creek will soon benefit from more than \$350,000 in restoration and environmental education projects as compensation for injuries from two recent oil/chemical spills, it was announced today.

The States of Oregon and Washington, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have reached a settlement with the Port of Portland and Marine Terminals Corporation, who have agreed to pay \$153,740 in compensation for a diesel spill into the Columbia Slough in May 2003. A separate agreement with Thermo Fluids Inc. provides \$203,378 in compensation for a spill of used motor oil and chemicals into Johnson Creek in March 2004.

"These two settlements reflect that the public is as concerned about spills that injure natural resources in urban environments as they are about spills in wild areas," said Dave Allen, Director of the Service's Pacific Region. "Regardless of the location, the public expects companies responsible for injuring natural resources to pay to restore the environment."

Dr. Michael Szumski, a natural resource damage assessment specialist for the Fish and Wildlife Service said, "These settlements showcase what can be accomplished when companies step up as responsible corporate citizens. We were particularly impressed by Thermo Fluids and their president Bill Newton, as they

demonstrated a strong personal and professional concern for restoring the environment both during and after the spill.”

Used motor oil and sulfuric acid entered Johnson Creek following a fire at Thermo Fluids Inc.’s facility in southeast Portland. Thermo Fluids Inc. is an Arizona-based recycling company. The oil and acid entered Johnson Creek, killing more than 2,600 fish.

The money for the Johnson Creek spill will benefit several local conservation projects. Portland’s Bureau of Environmental Services will receive \$144,650 to improve aquatic and riparian habitat on Errol Creek, a tributary to Johnson Creek. An additional \$58,728 will support community outreach programs and will include educational panels placed at creek and road crossings along the Springwater Corridor. Funds will also be used to purchase field equipment to give students from local schools a hands-on opportunity to learn about stream ecology and to monitor the water quality of Johnson Creek.

The release of approximately 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel at the Port of Portland’s Terminal 6 occurred on the night of May 2, 2003 when a fuel truck was accidentally overfilled. The spilled fuel flowed into a storm drain that emptied into Columbia Slough, made its way into the lower Willamette and could be seen for several miles down the Columbia River.

The money from the Terminal 6 settlement will go to *Metro* to restore nesting habitat for western painted turtles in Smith and Bybee Wetlands (a \$46,000 project) and to improve aquatic and riparian habitat in the lower Columbia Slough (a \$68,000 project). In addition, \$40,000 will go to the Audubon Society of Portland to build a flight cage for injured birds, provide oil spill response training for staff and volunteers, and fund educational outreach on the impacts of toxins in the urban environment.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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